



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Sharon White
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 3, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Although Ambassador Schumaker has only recently started work as the Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU), he has worked extensively in this region for many years, and we are happy to welcome him to the OSCE.

He brings the expertise and insight that will be crucial for the PCU's important work over the next few years.

The Orange Revolution was a dramatic event, a watershed moment that captivated the world's attention. However, the road to democracy is long and painstaking.

It requires a long-term commitment from the top of the government down to each local municipality. For that reason, we strongly supported the expansion of the PCU's activities over the last two years and welcome continued growth in 2006.

In this respect, we fully support the PCU's work in all three dimensions, many aspects of which Ambassador Schumaker has so usefully highlighted for us today.

The Project Coordinator has supported the retraining of hundreds of discharged military personnel in such areas as business management and computer technology to help their transition back to civilian life.

The PCU has helped stimulate regional development and entrepreneurship with its Local Economic Development Project. The project has helped develop micro and small enterprises, and has led to the creation of 1100 new jobs.

The PCU has assisted the Rivne Oblast attract foreign investment and has stimulated the growth of eco-tourism in the Lower Danube region.

Mr. Chairman, the PCU and the Government of Ukraine should be congratulated for the great strides they have made in solidifying Ukraine's transition to a prosperous democracy.

The PCU has implemented programs aimed at further strengthening Ukraine's democratic governance by improving the Central Voter Registry and increasing public participation in the decision-making process.

Such efforts should over time help increase transparency and accountability at all levels of government.

The United States has been one of the PCU's - and the Government of Ukraine's - closest partners in this over the past year.

We look forward to working with them in the months and years to come in our efforts to help the Ukrainian people strengthen their democratic institutions, enhance stability and security for their country and the region, and build a prosperous society on a firm foundation of the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms.

Thank you.